

Subject: Fwd: A smaller matter
From: Nate Kaplan <nate.kaplan@lacity.org>
Date: 02/15/2012 02:18 PM
To: Miki Payne <miki@hbdrollinger.com>, Don Duckworth
<duckworth.donald@gmail.com>, jruhlen916 <jruhlen916@aol.com>

fyi

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **mike bonin** <mike.bonin@lacity.org>
Date: Wed, Feb 15, 2012 at 1:48 PM
Subject: A smaller matter
To: Michael LoGrande <Michael.LoGrande@lacity.org>
Cc: Whitney Blumenfeld <Whitney.Blumenfeld@lacity.org>, Nate Kaplan
<Nate.Kaplan@lacity.org>

Mike-

Thanks for the doing the call about New West. Bill sent a letter to PLUM today on the matter. I'll make sure staff sends you a copy.

On a smaller, but time-sensitive matter, we could use your help trying to untangle some red tape over a trash enclosure in Westchester, at the Westchester Town Center, off Sepulveda. Right now, the trash bins are exposed, and the owners and neighbors don't like the way it looks. The owners are willing to enclose the bins, but the City is insisting on so many bells and whistles that the project is too costly and complicated for them to want to do it. If the City stands strong on all its demands, it will be a lose-lose, with nothing happening, and the current ugly bins remaining open to public view. We would like to prevent the lose-lose from happening, and allow the owner to enclose the bins in something less expensive than a Trump Hotel.

Here is some more detailed info:

Current State

The Westchester Town Center BID and Ohio Teachers Association (the owners of the parking lot behind Kohls) are requesting a variance or exemption from the current CDO landscaping requirements for a trash enclosure. Currently, the trash bins do not have an enclosure and are scattered in the north/west section of the parking lot.

The Ask

The BID and the owners are asking for this exception because the costs of building the trash enclosures per the specific guidelines of the CDO are too costly, because Planning is asking for them to build new irrigation lines which would cost more than the trash enclosures themselves. This does not necessarily need to happen per the CDO because this specific requirement is phrased as a "should" not "shall". A Director's determination could easily help the BID and the owners acquire the authorization to proceed on a project that everyone in the community would be very proud of. Planning also stated that they not only didn't want to comply with the intent of the CDO but the City Landscape Requirements

Objections from Planning

Planning originally wanted to stick by the CDO's specific language and require the BID and the owner to install a new irrigation system to water the creeping vines to make sure they don't die in the future. Planning now says that they want an attractive design that complements the existing main structures. Design cues should come from existing buildings and not be just a cinder block wall with stucco. Planning also wants them to use drought tolerant plant and provide a proposed plant list must be included and "stamped by a Landscape practitioner" proving that these plants are actually native and drought tolerant. Planning is also requesting a professional rendering of the proposed trash enclosure. The BID and the owner believe having an architect to draft a rendering for a trash enclosure is too expensive and not necessary for this small scale project.

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Deadline

If the owners do not feel comfortable that they will receive City Planning approval by the end of this week, they say will decide to not build anything. (This issue has been going on for months.)

*Dept. Planning Staff = Kevin Jones and Conni Pallini

Thanks for any help you can provide.

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